

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SALT T 00266 041201Z

50  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INRE-00

ACDE-00 /026 W  
----- 066998

O 041130Z JUL 75  
FM USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2684

S E C R E T SALT TWO GENEVA 266

EXDIS/SALT

SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR SECDEF

DEPT ALSO PASS FOR ACTION TO CHAIRMAN, JCS

DEPT ALSO PASS FOR INFO TO DIRECTOR DIA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PARM  
SUBJECT: STATEMENT ON BACKFIRE (SALT TWO-708)

1. AT PLENARY MEETING ON 5 AUGUST, AMBASSADOR JOHNSON PLANS  
TO HAVE GENERAL ROWNY ANSWER SOVIET ELABORATION OF DEFINITIONS  
WHICH THEY GAVE ON 29 JULY.

2. IN VIEW OF SENSITIVITY OF BACKFIRE ISSUE, REQUEST YOUR  
CONCURRENCE OR COMMENTS ON THAT PORTION OF THE  
STATEMENT QUOTED BELOW:

"A. TURNING NOW TO HEAVY BOMBERS, WE NOTE THAT THERE IS  
AGREEMENT THAT COUNTING ANY FUTURE BOMBER IN THE 2400 AGGRE-  
GATE WILL BE MADE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS BY COMPARING THAT  
BOMBER WITH OTHER BOMBERS ALREADY INCLUDED IN THE AGGREGATE.  
IT IS IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAT WE UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH COMPAR-  
SONS WILL BE MADE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PRINCIPAL CRITERION FOR  
SUCH COMPARISONS SHOULD BE THE BOMBER'S OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.  
AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS WHICH DETERMINE THIS CAPA-

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BILITY ARE THE FACTORS OF INTERCONTINENTAL RANGE AND STRATEGICALLY

SIGNIFICANT PAYLOAD.

"B. SUCH A COMPARISON CAN BE MADE IN THE CASE OF BACKFIRE. IT HAS CAPABILITIES COMPARABLE OR SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF THE TYPES OF AIRCRAFT WHICH BOTH SIDES AGREE ARE HEAVY BOMBERS. DATA AVAILABLE FROM PUBLIC SOURCES REVEAL THAT BACKFIRE CAN CARRY ABOUT THE SAME PAYLOAD AS THE BEAR AND ALMOST TWICE THE PAYLOAD OF THE BISON TO INTERCONTINENTAL RANGES. IN A COMPARISON OF HIGH ALTITUDE, SUBSONIC, UNREFUELED RANGES OF BOMBERS CARRYING NORMAL OPERATIONAL PAYLOADS, THESE SAME PUBLIC SOURCES INDICATE THAT BACKFIRE IS SUPERIOR IN RANGE TO EARLY MODELS OF THE B-52 AND THE PROPOSED B-1 AND IS COMPARABLE IN RANGE TO THE BISON.

"C. IN HIS JULY 9 ELABORATION OF THE SOVIET POSITIONS, GENERAL BELETSKY ASSERTED THAT THE U.S. POSITION ON BACKFIRE WAS BASED IN PART ON ITS AIR REFUELING CAPABILITY. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. POSITION IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE FACT THAT BACKFIRE'S RANGE CAN BE EXTENDED BY AIR REFUELING. THE COMPARISONS I HAVE JUST MADE SHOW THAT BACKFIRE'S UNREFUELED RANGE IS EQUAL TO AND IN SOME CASES SUPERIOR TO MANY OF THE BOMBERS THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO COUNT IN THE 2400 AGGREGATE.

"D. IF ONE CHOOSES TO COMPARE EXTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BACKFIRE WITH THOSE OF OTHER HEAVY BOMBERS, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE BACKFIRE IS A NEW AIRCRAFT AND NOT AN UPGRADED VERSION OF AN OLDER SYSTEM. TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS ADVANCED FUSELAGE DESIGNS, VARIABLE GEOMETRY WINGS, LIGHTER MATERIALS, AND IMPROVED ENGINES, PERMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALLER BOMBERS WITH CAPABILITIES EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THOSE OF OLDER DESIGN HEAVY BOMBERS CURRENTLY IN SERVICE, THEREFORE, THE TREND IN FUTURE BOMBERS WILL BE TOWARD SMALLER SIZE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE BACKFIRE IS APPROXIMATELY 20 PERCENT SMALLER AND LIGHTER IN WEIGHT THAN THE BISON, AND SIMILARLY, THE B-1 IS APPROXIMATELY 20 PERCENT SMALLER/LIGHTER THAN THE B-52."

3. REQUEST REPLY BY YOUR COB 4 AUGUST.

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NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BOMBER AIRCRAFT, SALT (ARMS CONTROL), NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975SALTT00266  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 24 JUN 2003  
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EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** STATEMENT ON BACKFIRE (SALT TWO-708)  
**TAGS:** PARM, US, UR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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